

SECRET

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

22 JUN 1984

ER-84-2520

The Honorable Elliott Abrams
The Assistant Secretary for Human Rights
and Humanitarian Affairs
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Elliott:

I appreciated your letter of 4 June and fully understand that [] is a respected and reputable authority on human rights. I am impressed to hear of her interests and efforts in interviewing refugees and support her desire to publish on the ills of Vietnamese reeducation camps since this is a subject of interest and concern to our Government.

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You might be interested in knowing that over the past several years our analytical effort on Vietnam has focused on two issues: the stability of the Communist regime in Hanoi, and Hanoi's ability to solidify control over all of Indochina. To help us analyze these questions, we have examined Vietnam's domestic problems--resistance in the south toward collectivization, economic stagnation, and the continuing activities of resistance groups, for example--and we are beginning to study likely replacements for Hanoi's aging leadership.

In doing these studies, we have necessarily touched on several of the areas of interest to []. A paper we published in June 1983, for example, noted that Hanoi has used reeducation camps as one method of neutralizing resistance to government attempts to integrate the south. And in December 1983, we examined Hanoi's repression of antiregime leaders among Vietnam's ethnic and religious groups. Unfortunately, because of their classification, these studies are not releasable to [].

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The use of reeducation camps is only one of a number of Vietnamese policies aimed at strengthening control over the country, and we are unable to devote significant resources to

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studying this single issue. As a result, we have not collated or analyzed information on such issues as camp locations and conditions or the health and attitudes of prisoners.

Our Directorate of Operations has a program for debriefing Vietnamese refugees, primarily in Southeast Asia, as one facet of keeping up with the internal political situation in Vietnam. Information on reeducation camps, while not a specific requirement for debriefing, has been a byproduct of this program since 1975. Many of the reports containing information on the reeducation camps have been disseminated to your office as well as DIA. As you might suspect, DIA is interested in receiving the results of refugee debriefings primarily in the context of POW/MIA issue.

I believe the Agency could profit from having one of our Vietnamese analysts meet with [] to hear her out on the results of her research on conditions in Vietnamese reeducation camps. Presumably such a meeting can be arranged by having our analyst contact your office directly. Secondly, one of my officers from the Directorate of Operations will call you soon to discuss our disseminations on the reeducation camps. Perhaps some of the reports which are not too highly classified can be made available to [] These suggested exchanges with [] should accrue to our mutual benefit.

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Yours,

/s/ William J. Casey

William J. Casey
Director of Central Intelligence

J - DDI
1 - ER

ROUTING AND TRANSMITTAL SLIP		Date
TO: (Name, office symbol, room number, building, Agency/Post)		20 June 1984 <i>u</i>
1. DDI Registry	Initials	Date
2. DDI	<i>[Signature]</i>	21 JUN 1984 <i>[Signature]</i>
3. Executive Registry		
4. DDCI <i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	22 JUN 1984
5. DCI		
Action	File	Note and Return
Approval	For Clearance	Per Conversation
As Requested	For Correction	Prepare Reply
Circulate	For Your Information	See Me
Comment	Investigate	Signature
Coordination	Justify	

REMARKS

Bill - The new last paragraph proposes our getting together with [redacted] to exchange info on the "Re-education camps."

DO NOT use this form as a RECORD of approvals, clearances, and similar actions

(Name, org. symbol, Agency/Post)	Room No.—Bldg.
[redacted] AD/OEA	Phone No. [redacted]

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OPTIONAL FORM 41 (Rev. 7-76)
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Central Intelligence Agency
Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence

Bill -




RETURN TO
DDI

plk
18/6/84

Proposed reply to
Elliott Abrams. This
VN refugee area is one
where people like  25X1
probably have better access
than CIA does.

should leave
that ~~man~~ 25X1
curiously

Bob - It seems to me
we should see if we can
profitably gain information
& insight from an exchange
of information here to for results
 - an analyst working on Vets 25X1

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
ROUTING SLIP

TO:

		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI		X		
2	DDCI		X		
3	EXDIR		X		
4	D/ICS				
5	DDI	X			
6	DDA				
7	DDO				
8	DDS&T				
9	Chm/NIC				
10	GC				
11	IG				
12	Compt				
13	D/Pers				
14	D/OLL				
15	D/PAO				
16	SA/IA				
17	AO/DCI				
18	C/IPD/OIS				
19	NIO/EA		X		
20					
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22					
SUSPENSE		<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> 12 June Date </div>			

Remarks

Recommendation please to DCI together
with a reply for his signature.

Ex

6 June 84

Date

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

Executive Registry

84-2520

June 4, 1984

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Mr. William J. Casey
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Langley, Virginia

Dear Bill:

An incident last Thursday surrounding Ginetta Sagan, a founder of Amnesty International and a well known figure in human rights circles, prompts me to write you with two concerns: one procedural, the other with much deeper policy implications.

Unlike many of her colleagues, Ginetta is balanced. She fully accepts that the worst human rights atrocities and abuses occur in closed, Communist societies. Aware that documenting these crimes is infinitely more difficult than documenting human rights abuses in authoritarian states, Ginetta believes it is incumbent upon human rights groups to devote as much time as possible to chronicling the human rights practices of Communist states. She uses the best means available to her to perform this task - she systematically and thoroughly interviews, in painstaking manner, emigres and refugees from totalitarian regimes. Her steadfast insistence on the premises and methods of her work has given her no small amount of trouble within Amnesty International.

Ginetta has for several years been interviewing Indochinese refugees, in particular documenting conditions in Vietnamese reeducation camps from 1975 to present. She is preparing a major article on the subject for publication next Spring whose upshot will be to make the Thieu regime's renowned "tiger cages" look like bridal suites at the Ritz compared to what followed. Her findings can only benefit this Administration's foreign policy, its public diplomacy efforts, and the great struggle to which you and I are dedicated.

Ginetta called me to see whether I couldn't arrange a meeting with USG analysts to have her findings corroborated. It seems to me we might also learn a good deal from her. To my dismay, INR, after a flurry of inter-bureau phone calls, finally came up with one analyst who last paid attention to the issue several years ago. They now have a summer intern plowing through past cable traffic to try to get a sketch of the situation. According to INR at least, debriefings of Indochinese refugees have been random, incomplete, and episodic.

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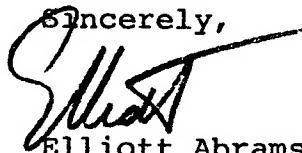
Our approach to CIA analysts (referred by INR) met with flat rejection. Despite a thorough explanation of who Ginetta Sagan was (she should have been known through her previous writings on Vietnam) and the ramifications of her work, my office was told that not only did no Vietnam analyst have any time for such a meeting, but that the CIA had almost no information on the subject!

Can this possibly be true? Is it possible that no one has done systematic debriefings of Vietnamese refugees? Have no other sources disclosed which reeducation camps remain open, which are closed, descriptions of general camp conditions, the kind of prisoners still interned, and the health, occupations, and attitudes of those prisoners released? I wouldn't necessarily expect the Agency to search out such information, but I would expect such information to have been gathered and collated through routine collection operations.

If I assume the best, my concern is mundane and procedural. The information is available, but comparing notes with Ginetta Sagan meant more work so the Division Chief just rudely brushed us off. Such obstacles are overcome, as they often are in bureaucracies, by being bucked up and generating letters like this one, irritating both of us. But if I assume the worst, i.e. what INR and CIA claim about the extent of our information on reeducation camps is in fact true, then my concerns are deeper. It means that one woman, working alone on a shoestring budget has more complete, accurate, and up-to-date information about the internal political situation in Vietnam than the combined intelligence resources of the United States Government.

Please write me, Bill, and tell me it ain't so.

Sincerely,



Elliott Abrams

Assistant Secretary for Human Rights
and Humanitarian Affairs

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